

From: Division for Libraries and Technology,
Public Library Development

The following is provided to assist public libraries in municipalities considering exemption from the county library tax for 2014.

How does a public library or county calculate qualification for exemption from the county library tax for 2014?

Under Wisconsin Statute 43.64(2), municipalities with public libraries may be exempt from the county library tax if they appropriate locally an amount above the defined minimum. In order to determine if a municipality may request an exemption from the county library tax for 2014 (the tax the county board will set in the fall of 2013 and expend in 2014), complete the following calculations.

1. Determine the 2012 equalized value of the property taxed for 2013 county library service. This will be the 2012 total county equalized value less the equalized value of any communities exempting from the county library tax for 2013 (municipalities exempted from the appropriation levy set in the fall of 2012).
2. Determine the total county library services appropriation for 2013. This will be the appropriation made in the fall of 2012 for all 2013 county library service.
3. Divide the appropriation amount determined in step 2 by the equalized value determined in step 1. This is the county library tax levy rate for 2013 (the appropriation made in the fall of 2012).
4. Multiply the county tax levy rate from step 3 by the 2013 equalized value of the municipality being considered for exemption. The result is the minimum amount the municipality must appropriate for 2014 to exempt itself from the county library tax levy for 2014.
5. Compare the minimum amount calculated in step 4 with the 2014 municipal appropriation for the library (the appropriation made by the municipality in the fall of 2013). The municipal appropriation cannot include any state, federal, or county payments provided specifically for library services.

If the municipal appropriation is greater than the minimum amount required for exemption, the municipality may request to be exempted from the county tax. The exemption may be refused if by September 1, of any year the county board determines the public library has not complied with any minimum standards of operation approved under s.43.11(3)(d).

Municipalities in joint libraries may now be able to exempt by an alternate means as a result of 2013 Act 20 which amends 43.64 (2) (c) to read:

Notwithstanding sub. (2m), any city, village, town, or school district in a county levying a tax for public library service under sub. (1) is exempt from the tax levy if all of the following apply:

1. The city, village, town, or school district is included in a joint library under s. 43.53.
2. The city, village, town, or school district levies a tax for public library service, less the amount levied for public library capital expenditures, and appropriates and spends for a library fund during the year for which the county tax levy is made an amount that is not less than the average of the previous 3 years.

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